

Spotlight



Displays and exhibits in the Expo '67 Youth Pavilion will be housed in 12 thematic modules surrounding an open square or 'agora'. The agora, along with a 250-seat theatre, open-air amphitheatre and 'cafe-dansant', will be used for a wide range of cultural, social and athletic events, all sponsored by Steinberg's Limited.

The Connection to the Mainline

by Gary Gayda

'The Connection' sounded intriguing - an honest-to-God, no-holds-barred, guts-and-gore treatment of heroin addiction.

'Miss Shirley Clarke did it,' whined the press agent in my ear. 'It won the Critics' Prize at the 1961 Cannes Film Festival. Honest, brilliant treatment of drug addicts - shows withdrawal symptoms and everything!' she enthused.

How could I refuse.

The special press screening brought out a curious dozen. Representatives from the daily papers sat beside William Ronald, late of 'The Umbrella' (I was disappointed - he doesn't carry one.) and beside him was - or was it? - Dennis 'Garterbeltmania' Burton. Ronald snarled about Toronto's non-hipsters as he waited to see something in a hipper vein.

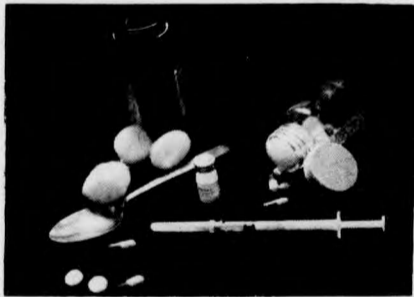
'The Connection' is a play that tries hard to be a movie. And it almost succeeds. But in the end the viewer is left wondering why Jack Gelber, who wrote the screenplay (based on his off-Broadway success), and Shirley Clarke, the producer-director, couldn't have come to some consensus on the movie's purpose and style. Was it to be solid realism in a documentary format? Or a heavily symbolic message-sermon? As it turns out, 'The Connection' is a bit of both.

Picture the filthy, ramshackle pad of an urban American addict, and call him Leach. Make him somewhat of a homosexual with a lousy sex life (so the others say) and have him in a constant hang-up about his apartment's appearance (Freudian womb symbol, no doubt). Add seven more addict-buddies (2 whites, 5 negroes), plus a film director and his cameraman who have paid for 8 'fix-

es' to be in on the scene. Imagine tension, and occasional nausea as they wait for the pusher, Cowboy (with his white milk). Blend in a touch of irony, as a pseudo-Salvation Army granny enters with Cowboy, and overt and open hostility between the junkies, and the junkies and the outsiders, and you have 'The Connection'.

Visually, it is not an aesthete's picnic. The apartment hovel (the only set in the movie) is drab,

Clarke Hill



and the junkies are a filthy lot. And the boys mainline in the john, which the Sister believes to be a baptismal booth.

Using a hand-held camera - around which each addict soliloquizes - is effective, but it becomes tedious after the fourth time. The dialogue, too, is generally boring. Granted, the monotony and the up-down, on-off, love-hate-withdraw cycles of the heroin hippy's life are reinforced by the uneven script. But the unity of the film is destroyed and its dramatic impact blunted when it oscillates between chitter-chatter and soul-searing soliloquies. Totally inadequate acting

by 'name' actor William Redfield as the director (maybe he's not hungry enough) further handicaps integration of the reality and film-within-a-reality-film concepts.

Some nice touches are evident, though. The junkies rarely fulfill promises but are paragons of pettiness as they revile and parody each other. Leach, just before his final fix from white-knight-cum-pony-express-rider, Cowboy, is seen reflecting on the window near the cross-frame. A little bald-headed man walks in with a record player, stares at each addict, then carefully unravels the machine's cord, plugs it into an outlet above a light-bulb and puts the needle on the record. This happens twice. The first time, Leach tells him the needle is bad, it is going to wreck the record. The second time (after the fixes), it plays uninterrupted, but it is the same jazz record. A complicated, but perfect analogy.

There is real jazz, too, but it rarely swings. (What can you expect from four junkies?) It sounds like a Krupa-era re-incarnation, the type your folks used to jitterbug to. It just bugged me.

The main thesis of the film - everybody searches for his own 'connection' - does come over, but not strongly. Still, it leaves us pondering. To whom does the addict try to connect? To himself, suggests one of them. But this short circuit is questioned throughout the film. Why does he try to connect is still another unanswered question.

They served drugs to us after the movie - ethyl alcohol in a local hotel. You won't get that ironic touch at the New Yorker, but you will see a play that didn't quite become a movie.

Spotlight is a weekly supplement of Excalibur.

frank liebeck
anne dublin
anita levine
carol etkin

critics dave warga

editor don mckay

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3

Mr. Douglas Martin, Secretary of the National Assembly of Baha'is of Canada, 'THE FOUNDATION OF JUSTICE', Room 152, York Hall, Glendon Campus, 12:30 p.m.

JAZZ/CLASSICAL CONCERT, The Carol Britto Trio, Dining Hall, Founders College, York Campus, 3:00 p.m.

Special Philosophy Lecture, Professor Walter Creery, Waterloo Lutheran University, 'THEOLOGICAL PROPOSITIONS OF WILLIAM OF OCKHAM', Music Room, Junior Common Room, York Hall, Glendon Campus, 8:00 p.m.

Sidney Faulkner, attorney for the Fort Hood Three, will talk about the case and G.I.'s in Vietnam, Founders Social and Debates Room, York Campus, 3:00 p.m.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5

Every Sunday at York, Theatre Series, THE THREE DESKS by James Reaney, Burton Auditorium, York Campus, 8:30 p.m.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6

First of two concerts presented by CBC Radio in association with York University, York Hall, Glendon Campus, 8:45 p.m., for free tickets contact: Dean Tathan's Office, Glendon, or Theatre Office, York.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7

THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY by Ingmar Bergman, 8:30 p.m. A short film presenting an analysis of Bergman's search for meaning in his film will precede the movie.

EXCALIBUR will run your want-ads, personal messages, and lost-and-found-notices for a minimal fee.

Submit copy to Room 002 by Monday night for Friday's issue

EXCALIBUR SUGGESTS:

STAGE
O'Keefe Centre -- Ilya Darling-tryout of the musical of 'Never on Sunday' starring Melina Mercouri.

The Central Library Theatre -- An evening of bittersweet comedy is provided by Francois Billet-

doux's Tchín-Tchin.

The Royal Alexandra -- You'll never guess what has come back to the Alex again. You are right! It's the Second City Revue.

MOVIES

International Cinema -- Shallow and lifeless love stories are still being told in A Man and a Wo-

man.

Towne Cinema -- Antonioni's first film in English is here. Be sure to see Blow Up.

New Yorker -- After six years of pettiness from the censors we are at last being allowed to see The Connection.

Lowe's Uptown -- Gambit is one of those entertaining, but

not great movies. It is by no means a complete waste.

EXHIBITIONS

Art Gallery of Ontario - Segal, Dine, and Oldenburg are showing their fascinating collections of wierdo art.

Jerrold Morris Gallery -- Charles Edward Gill, an American pop artist, debuts this week.